

## **ADJOURNED BUDGET MEETING APRIL 28, 2005**

An Adjourned Meeting of the Town Council (adjourned from Wednesday, April 27, 2005) was held on Thursday, April 28, 2005 at 5:45 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Town Hall with Chairperson Russell A. Morin presiding.

**Present:** Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis, and Chairperson Morin.

**Also present:** Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk; and Lisa Hancock, Finance Director.

### **POLICE - 420 (C-54 to C-63)**

Present: Police Chief James Cetran and Administrative Analyst Ellen Walsh.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that the previous breakouts of Detective Bureau, Support Services, Patrol Bureau, and Building & Facility Maintenance have all now been combined into the 420 account titled Chief's Office/Administration. She said that there are two big issues that will be addressed by Chief Cetran and these are the purchase of tasers, with which she agrees however funding does not allow for them, and two new positions of an officer and a sergeant. She said that, compared to surrounding communities, Wethersfield is on the low end with regard to number of officers, and public safety is a number one concern.

Chief Cetran provided a video of actual police situations and tasers, and stated that Wethersfield is falling behind with less-than-lethal weaponry and this presents serious ramifications. He said that Rocky Hill issues a less-than-lethal weapon to every officer. Chief Cetran stated that there are no residual effects with the taser and he said that all officers are tased so that they can know what it feels like. He said that the new version X-26 tasers cost \$1,000 each and the Department will actually be questioned when they don't use this type of weaponry. Chief Cetran distributed an article from the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin regarding the use of tasers and liability.

Chairperson Morin asked the Chief how many officers he has on during his busiest shift and the Chief said that he would need a minimum of ten tasers for patrol officers, although he would like one for every officer.

Councilor Fortunato asked what type of training is offered to the officers using the tasers. Chief Cetran said that it would be the same type of training offered for firearm use. Councilor Fortunato asked if there is an additional cost for the training or is this built into the cost of the weapon. Chief Cetran said that the cost is built into the defensive tactics training done once per year by the Department.

Councilor Adil asked if anything has been done to obtain grant money for the tasers. Chief Cetran said that there are almost no grants available for tasers other than Homeland Security, and it doesn't look good right now that Police will be allowed to purchase tasers from this grant.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked Chief Cetran if there are any drug forfeiture funds left over to use toward the purchase of tasers. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that a report of this will be provided at a later date. Deputy Mayor Karangekis said that he fully supports the use of tasers as they are effective and present less of a liability.

Councilor Czernicki asked Chief Cetran if there are any other items in his budget that he would be willing to do without for a year in order to purchase the tasers. Chief Cetran said that there is nothing in his budget that is extra and a number of items have actually been cut from last year's budget. Councilor Czernicki asked Chief Cetran which he would choose if he had to make a choice between the tasers or the two positions and he said that he would choose the tasers to reduce both officer and suspect injury.

Councilor Forrest asked if the Town's insurance rates will decrease due to the use of tasers and the Town Manager said that she doubts it, but she will find out for sure.

Regarding his budget, Chief Cetran explained that the amount for printing has increased because the Department is up for re-accreditation this year. He said that the Conferences & Training account contains funding for an officer who was invited to attend the FBI Academy and some of the miscellaneous training was cut. Chief Cetran said that the Consultant Fees account includes a cut of \$1,000 for psychological exams for new recruits, which is an important aspect of recruitment and selection.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis stated that it is not wise to hire anyone as a police officer without a psychological report and he would not want to hamper this portion of the hiring process.

Councilor Fortunato asked the Town Manager why she cut the \$1,000 from this account and the Town Manager said that the funding will somehow be found in the budget by the time it is needed, as she would never hire an officer without conducting a psychological exam first. Chief Cetran said that it limits the ability to choose, but it's not something the Department can't get through.

Chief Cetran stated that the State will be providing maintenance and detailing for the boat in the amount of \$3,600. He said that the difference in the requested and Manager's amount in the Equipment line is due to the tasers being cut as well as the matching funds for the SUV since the Department did not receive the grant.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis asked Chief Cetran what the current number of police personnel is and was told that it is forty-six with the School Resource Officer and he would eventually like to get to fifty in the next five to ten years. Chief Cetran said that fifty seems to be the magic number when it comes to grants and smaller departments get left behind.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the Homeland Security funds can be used for the Police Department. Chief Cetran said that pooling the money together through CRCOG makes for more funds available; however the money does not go specifically to the Police Department, but is used for bigger issues such as radios.

Councilor Czernicki asked how fifty vs. forty-five officers would affect overtime and Chief Cetran said that overtime will definitely decrease significantly since shifts are currently filled to a minimum level. Chief Cetran said that additional officers will provide for better service and more safety. Councilor Czernicki asked what a staff of fifty officers will do to the overtime amount with regard to a serious crime and also asked the Chief if shifts are currently being filled since she often hears a call going out on the scanner to fill shifts. Chief Cetran said that the costs for overtime are already way down since officers would rather have the time off. He said that the understaffing means that response time changes as well as back up availability and this is why he is trying to increase the staffing slowly over a period of time.

Chairperson Morin said that everyone is aware of the value of the services provided by the Police Department and the Council will look at the requested budget very closely. Chief Cetran said that he understands the Council's position and the men and women in his Department will continue to fight crime no matter what happens.

## **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS - 184**

Present: Chief Building Official Brian O'Connor and Administrative Analyst Tony Martino.

Mr. O'Connor pointed out that the Salaries & Wages have dropped since the Planning & Zoning are now responsible for the special permits

## **BUILDING INSPECTION - 530 (C-80 to C-82)**

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien announced that as of July 1 the Health Department will no longer do the property maintenance code since none of the other member Towns do this; therefore the Building Department is picking up an additional twelve hours per week for this.

Mr. O'Connor explained that the increase in Salaries & Wages is due to this Department taking over the property maintenance enforcement as the Town Manager explained. He said that of the twelve hours, nine will be for property maintenance and three will be for the Historic District Commission.

Chairperson Morin asked what the \$1,800 cut in Computer Software was for. Mr. O'Connor said that he had requested a new computer laptop to replace an older model.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that the Building Department has done very, very well with revenues this year with two months still to go.

Councilor Hemmann asked if a PDA can be used in the field and brought back to the office to plug in information rather than using a laptop. Mr. O'Connor said that PDA's are used currently and work very well. Councilor Hemmann suggested that in lieu of a laptop, a PDA be purchased. Mr. Martino stated that the current building inspection software on the PDA's is not compatible with the GOTMS. Mr. O'Connor said that he is currently looking into software that will convert from the PDA over to the GOTMS system.

### **OTHER FUNDS (E-1 to E-17)**

#### Escrow and Trust Funds:

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien announced that finally all of the trust funds and other accounts were reviewed to determine their definitions.

Rae Ann Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager, explained that she and Account Clerk Kathy Natale reviewed all of the escrow and trust funds and determined their use and balances in order to balance them back to Munis and other paper records. She said that, in doing this, some accounts were identified that were very old and could be closed or moved into other accounts. Ms. Palmer proceeded to review a list of Town of Wethersfield Escrow and Trust Funds balances as of 3/31/05 and a description of each, indicating when funds were combined. The greatest detail was provided for the Young Adults/ Parks & Recreation Programs which, as of 3/31/05, had a balance of \$353,080. Ms. Palmer broke out the transfers, separate account balances, escrow held for other groups/functions, and funds that will be transferred into the General Fund.

Councilor Czernicki said that the Health District Director told the Council last evening that the Active Aerobics and the Senior Active Fitness Programs are free programs yet there is a balance of \$12,244.80 and \$1,109 respectively. Councilor Czernicki said that the money collected after the first class was rolled into the Parks & Recreation Department to cover administrative tasks and that the remaining funds generated would return to the Health District. She asked if this money should go to the Health District to offset the per capita fee increase to the member communities. Ms. Palmer explained that all of the balances include transfers that have been prepared but not posted yet. Councilor Czernicki asked for a listing of the balances with the transfers deducted.

Councilor Fortunato asked what the donations line in Escrow held for other groups/functions represents. Ms. Palmer said that this is funding that comes in from court ordered donations to the Parks & Recreation Department and it is anticipated that this money will be used toward the Mill Woods Master Plan and the Skate Park.

Councilor Cascio asked what the partnerships are. Ms. Palmer said that these are funds groups give to Parks & Recreation to enhance the parks and sports fields. Councilor Cascio stated that he doesn't believe that the Memorial Day Parade Committee has ever been told that there is such a large balance for the Parade being held in escrow. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that many of the groups need to be contacted, informed of account balances, and asked to use them in order to close out the accounts.

Councilor Hemmann said that she appreciates the work that went into the breakout, but she is uncomfortable with the substantial amount of money in these accounts and the unknowns involved such as where and how the money is being spent. She said that by holding these funds from year to year the Town is acting like a bank, and it is not. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien stated that a lot of administrative time goes into tracking activities in these accounts as well.

Councilor Czernicki asked why the revenues of approximately \$50,000 go into the 810 and 820 accounts instead of the General Fund. Ms. Hancock said that this is the General Fund. Councilor Czernicki asked why the postings of transfers take so long to occur after the activity season has ended. Ms. Palmer said that she has discussed this with the Director of Parks & Recreation and explained to Councilor Czernicki that she suspects that the transfers take a while because the work is done by means of an Excel program rather than software specifically designed for these types of calculations. Councilor Czernicki said that she also is very uncomfortable with this much money hanging around and she is surprised that auditors allow this to happen.

Ms. Hancock explained that with this type of system there often is a significant amount of funds toward the end of the fiscal year because the Parks & Recreation Department is gearing up for summer programs and camps. She said that the enrollment fees are collected; however the expenditures for the programs haven't occurred yet. She said that Parks & Recreation has very good control over the funds and everything expended from the accounts has to go through the Finance Department. Ms. Hancock said that the system can be reviewed for future budgeting.

Councilor Fortunato asked Ms. Palmer who accesses the Special Needs Escrow Fund and was told that this is accessed by the Social & Youth Services Department. Councilor Fortunato asked if there is a defining purpose of the funding or if it can be used toward the Social & Youth Services budget expenditures. Ms. Palmer said that the donations to this fund are to be used to help those in need and does not think it can be used toward the General Fund. Councilor Fortunato asked what the money in the Summer Wilderness and Crossroads funds are used for. Ms. Palmer said that this funding pays for program materials and instructors. Councilor Fortunato asked if the same scenario with escrow funds is currently occurring on the Board of Education side of the budget. Ms. Hancock said that she cannot respond to their financial situation as she is not involved in their actual accounts. Councilor Fortunato asked the Town Manager to ask Dr. Proctor about this.

Councilor Hemmann commented that the budget shows a negative balance of \$32,631 for the Nature Center and Ms. Palmer's handout shows an escrow balance of \$11,848, and she asked why there is a difference. Ms. Hancock explained that a transfer of \$40,000 back to the General Fund from the Nature Center was made by Joe Swetcky a while back and the transfer out was shown as an expense in the Nature Center Fund, but the money coming in from the fund that it used to be in was never reflected in the spreadsheet. She said that the negative number is incorrect and the \$11,848 is correct. Councilor Hemmann asked if the funds collected for programs that will run in 2005 can be put into a revenue source for 2005 so that it will not reflect in the previous year. Ms. Hancock said that when she worked in Colchester, the revenues collected in May and June for the upcoming season were set aside as deferred revenue in a separate account. She said that all other revenue went back to the General Fund.

Chairperson Morin thanked the staff for the tremendous amount of work that went into this breakout and agrees that there needs to be a cleaner, easier way to deal with this.

Councilor Forrest asked how the funding in escrow accounts is held and Ms. Hancock said that it depends on the type of account. Ms. Hancock said that some is in an investment fund and diversification is beginning to take place for other funds. She said that the management of engineering securities will also be reviewed to gain the most for the money.

Councilor Montinieri asked if the Influenza Vaccine was rolled into another fund and Ms. Palmer said that the Influenza Vaccine, Youth Services Counseling, and Youth Services Escrow were left off the list until it can be determined that the funding is back in place and once this is determined recommendations for use will be made.

Councilor Fortunato asked what is done next. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she would like to close out as many of the funds as she can and either distribute the funds appropriately or put the money into the General Fund. She said that this will have very little impact on the 2005-2006 budget.

#### Revenues:

Ms. Palmer reviewed the listing of fees for Town services and said that a list of Wethersfield Ordinances concerning fees has been sent to Attorney Bradley for review so that they can be amended and Wethersfield can start to collect fees directly. She said that the Roaming Dog fee is one on this list.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE ANIMAL CONTROL DAILY BOARD FEE TO \$10"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT PERMIT FEES AS FOLLOWS:  
BUILDING PERMIT TO \$30 FIRST \$1,000; \$16 EACH ADD'L \$1,000  
COMMERCIAL CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY TO \$70  
ZBA APPLICATION TO \$125 FOR TOWN FEE  
ZONING MAPS TO \$10  
RESIDENTIAL ZONING PERMITS TO \$50  
COMMERCIAL ZONING PERMITS TO \$100  
INOPERABLE CAR PERMIT TO \$25"**

, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY CENTER RENTAL FEES AS FOLLOWS:**

**PRIVATE RENTALS:**

**FULL BANQUET ROOM - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKENDS - \$600  
HALF BANQUET ROOM - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKENDS - \$500  
FIRESIDE ROOM - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKENDS - \$250  
GYMNASIUM - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKENDS - \$250  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKENDS - \$225  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$50  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKDAYS - \$40  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKDAYS - \$10  
FUNCTION ROOM - FIRST 3 HOURS - WEEKENDS - \$200  
FUNCTION ROOM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$50**

**NON-PROFIT RENTALS:**

**FULL BANQUET ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKENDS - \$150  
FULL BANQUET ROOM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$20  
FULL BANQUET ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKDAYS - \$75  
HALF BANQUET ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKENDS - \$75  
HALF BANQUET ROOM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$10  
HALF BANQUET ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKDAYS - \$40  
FIRESIDE ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKENDS - \$50  
FIRESIDE ROOM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$10  
FIRESIDE ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKDAYS - \$40  
FIRESIDE ROOM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKDAYS - \$15  
GYMNASIUM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$10  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKENDS - \$40  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$10  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. CHARGES - WEEKDAYS - \$30  
FUNCTION ROOM #3 - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKDAYS - \$10  
FUNCTION ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. FEES - WEEKENDS - \$30  
FUNCTION ROOM - EACH ADD'L HOUR - WEEKENDS - \$10  
FUNCTION ROOM - FIRST 5 HOURS + CUST. FEES - WEEKDAYS - \$20"**

, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Adil verified that these increases were run by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT FEES AS FOLLOWS:**

**AERIAL MAP BLUEPRINTS TO \$7.50**

**OTHER BLUEPRINTS TO \$7.50**

**STREET MAP TO \$7.50**

**SUBDIVISION MAP TO \$7.50**

**DRIVEWAY & EXCAVATION PERMITS TO \$40**

**SURVEY MONUMENTS TO \$40"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Deputy Mayor Karangekis moved **"TO INCREASE THE INLAND WETLANDS FEES AS FOLLOWS:**

**PRIVATE RES. PERMIT - SUMMARY - NO SIG. ACTIVITY TOWN FEE TO \$75**

**PRIVATE RES. PERMIT - PLENARY - NO SIG. ACTIVITY TOWN FEE TO \$125**

**WETLAND MAP TO \$7.50**

**MAP AMENDMENTS TOWN FEE TO \$125**

**REGULATIONS AMENDMENTS TOWN FEE TO \$125**

**SUBDIVISION MAP TO \$7.50"**

, seconded by Councilor Fortunato. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT FEES AS FOLLOWS:**

**SITE PLAN APPROVAL TOWN FEE TO \$200**

**SPECIAL EXCEPTION TOWN FEE TO \$200**

**ZONE CHANGE TOWN FEE TO \$250**

**SUBDIVISION & RE-SUBDIVISION TOWN FEE \$100 & \$50 PER LOT"**

, seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Czernicki moved **"TO INCREASE THE POLICE ACCIDENT PHOTOGRAPHS TO \$7.50"**, seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Czernicki moved **"TO INCREASE THE POLICE VENDOR PERMIT (DOOR TO DOOR) TO \$100"**, seconded by Councilor Cascio. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Cascio moved **"TO INCREASE THE POLICE VENDOR PERMIT FROM VEHICLE TO \$100"**, seconded by Councilor Czernicki. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Fortunato stated that \$85 is the average in surrounding communities for handicapped parking violations and she asked if the tickets already printed are special tickets pertaining to this. Ms. Palmer said that it is a general parking ticket used by officers and they check off the appropriate offense. Councilor Fortunato suggested that this item be looked at again by the Council next year. Councilor Fortunato asked if the officer could scratch off the item and write in a new amount and Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she did not think this would hold up in court. Ms. Palmer said that she will remind the Chief to inform her when the tickets are used up so that the Council can vote to increase the handicapped parking fee before new tickets are printed.

Councilor Forrest moved **"TO INCREASE THE POLICE FEE FOR AUDIO TAPES TO \$10"**, seconded by Councilor Hemmann. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE POLICE FEES AS FOLLOWS:**

**FALSE ALARM (DOUBLES AFTER 30 DAYS) - \$50 THIRD, \$75 FOURTH, \$100 FIFTH  
ALARMS MONITORED AT HDQTRS - ANNUAL TO \$200**

**ALARM REGISTRATION FEE TO \$25**

**USER CHARGE FOR CRUISER - PER HOUR TO \$10"**

, seconded by Councilor Montinieri. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"TO INCREASE THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT FEES AS LISTED"**, seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Forrest stated that for a number of the increased fees there is no amount given for the projected increase. Ms. Palmer said that the increases would be negligible.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the Public Works Department is way behind in projected revenues by approximately \$6,000 - \$7,000; therefore these fees need to be closely monitored to be sure that they haven't risen too high.

Councilor Montinieri moved **"WITHDREW THE MOTION TO INCREASE THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT FEES AS LISTED"**, seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Adil moved **"TO INCREASE THE SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT DIAL-A-RIDE ANNUAL FEE TO \$30"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Czernicki stated that she cannot support this increase as it taxes the few people who will pay it; however she does agree with the increase in the Senior Center membership.

Councilor Fortunato agreed with Councilor Czernicki's comments.

Councilor Adil said that he feels that the increase in the Senior Center membership will not make up for what will be lost in the Dial-A-Ride program. He asked how much is taken in for Senior Center memberships and Ms. Palmer said that she would need to check on this.

Ms. Palmer said that the Dial-A-Ride program does provide a sliding scale payment option for those who have trouble affording the program and that no one is turned away for inability to pay.

Councilor Czernicki said that Dr. Stilwell has provided information showing that some people have chosen not to use the Dial-A-Ride program since the \$25 fee was initiated and she feels that the additional \$5 is an unnecessary burden.

Chairperson Morin said that the Dial-A-Ride program provides a great benefit.

Councilor Fortunato asked if the sliding scale rate option is well advertised and Ms. Palmer said that she does not know about this. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that there are membership letters that go out each year and she will check to see if this information is provided. Councilor Fortunato said that she had been unaware of the sliding scale option and could support the increase as long as no one is being turned away and the option is well advertised.

Councilor Hemmann stated that when this program was discussed a number of years ago, she does not remember hearing anything about a sliding scale option when the fees were set or when the vendor was changed.

Councilor Adil, Councilor Forrest, Councilor Fortunato, Councilor Montinieri, and Deputy Mayor Karangekis voted AYE. Councilor Cascio, Councilor Czernicki, Councilor Hemmann, and Chairperson Morin voted NAY. The motion passed 5-4-0.

Councilor Czernicki moved **"TO INCREASE THE SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT THREE-YEAR SENIOR CENTER MEMBERSHIP FEE TO \$10"**, seconded by Councilor Adil.

Councilor Cascio said that an explanation will need to be provided to the members as to why the fee has doubled and they need to be well informed as to what they're getting for their membership dues.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien asked if other Towns charge this fee as she has never seen it. Ms. Palmer said that she

discussed this fee with the Social Services Department and they are very uncomfortable with increasing it because they don't want members deciding to go to a Senior Center in another Town that does not charge a fee.

Councilor Cascio suggested that this item might be tabled since Ms. Palmer has stated that the Department is uncomfortable with the increase. Chairperson Morin said that \$3.30 per year to be a member is pretty low.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. Councilor Cascio voted NAY. The motion passed 8-1-0.

Councilor Adil moved "**TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & YOUTH SERVICES PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC SERVICES ON A PER SESSION BASIS**", seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Councilor Fortunato asked for a listing of the current fees and Ms. Palmer said that she could provide this at a later date. She said that the average counseling fee per hour last year was \$11, which is being proposed to increase by \$4. Councilor Fortunato asked what feedback was received by the Department regarding cancellation fees and Ms. Palmer said that the Department stated that there are no cancellation fees currently charged and they are not comfortable with charging cancellation fees. Councilor Fortunato asked if any discussion was held regarding reimbursement from Husky. Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she has not had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Stilwell on this yet.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO INCREASE THE TAX DEPARTMENT RETURNED CHECK FEE (1ST TIME RETURN) TO \$25**", seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis.

Councilor Czernicki said that the Duplicate Tax Bills fee seems to be rather high and the Town Manager said that this is a brand new fee and is the first time the Town will be charging for the research being required during the tax season. Ms. Palmer said that the \$.50 charge is simply the per page copying fee. Ms. Palmer said that it takes a couple of hours to process each request.

Councilor Fortunato suggested that the Duplicate Tax Bills fee be given a different title to clarify the request. Ms. Palmer suggested that it be called a Tax Research fee.

Councilor Cascio clarified that a copy of a tax bill costing \$.50 this year will cost \$15 next year. Ms. Hancock said that she can't comment on the work involved. She said that if the task is only to go onto the computer and print out a copy, then she can agree that \$15 is high. She asked Ms. Palmer what information the Tax Collector shared with her on the time involved performing this task. Ms. Palmer said that she was told of the time used to research tax information for multiple years and multiple addresses.

Councilor Czernicki verified that the \$15 fee would be for a complicated research process rather than a copy of a tax bill and said that the title of the fee has to be changed therefore. Ms. Hancock suggested that the \$15 fee be titled "Tax Account Research".

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Czernicki moved "**TO ADD THE FEE FOR \$15 PER REQUEST FOR TAX ACCOUNT RESEARCH**", seconded by Councilor Adil. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

The Council reviewed a separate handout listing Wethersfield Parks & Recreation Department proposed fee increases for the Dance and Drama program and the Therapeutic Recreation Summer programs.

Councilor Czernicki asked when the Dance and Drama program was last increased as she remembers that it was just recently. She also asked how often and for how long the Therapeutic Recreation Summer programs meet.

Councilor Cascio said that he'd also like to know how often and for how long the Dance and Drama program meets as

well.

Ms. Palmer said that most of the program fees were increased last year and the Revenue Committee reviewed them to find that 99% of the Parks & Recreation fees are comparable to other Towns.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that she can add the proposed increases to the May 16 Council agenda so as to provide time for Councilors to receive requested information.

Before adjourning, Chairperson Morin requested that Councilors bring any budget adjustment requests to the next budget workshop on Wednesday, May 4. He said that, by Charter, the budget needs to be adopted by May 15 and he suggested that May 11 be scheduled for additional adjustments and adoption and May 12 for a back-up date.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:40 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN TO THE BUDGET WORKSHOP SESSION ON MAY 15 2005 AT 5:45 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT THE TOWN HALL**" seconded by Councilor Forrest. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council 5/16/05*